



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 33



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J.B. Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

GOD TEMPTS ABRAHAM

Gen 22:1¹¹ And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am." ² And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. ³ And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. ⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. ⁵ And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. ⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? ⁸ And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. ⁹ And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. ¹² And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. ¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. ¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. ¹⁵ And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, ¹⁶ And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: ¹⁷ That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; ¹⁸ And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. ¹⁹ So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba. ²⁰ And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; ²¹ Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram, ²² And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel. ²³ And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. ²⁴ And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah." (Genesis 22:1-24)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

After Abraham had sojourned in the Philistine's land for many days, God

tempted, or tested him. This was a test of his faith. He was commanded to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering to

God. The patriarch is not told where to go, only to begin the journey, and that God will identify the place for him. How

In an epochal test of his faith, God tempts Abraham, commanding that he offer Isaac to Him as a burnt offering – Given O. Blakely

CONTENTS

- ▶ INTRODUCTION
- ▶ GOD DID TEMPT ABRAHAM (22:1a)
- ▶ ABRAHAM SAID "HERE AM I" (22:1b)
- ▶ TAKE THY SON, THINE ONLY SON, WHOM THOU LOVEST (22:2)
- ▶ AND ABRAHAM ROSE UP EARLY AND WENT TO THE PLACE (22:3-4)
- ▶ I AND THE LAD WILL GO YONDER AND WORSHIP (22:5)
- ▶ ABRAHAM PREPARES FOR THE SACRIFICE (22:6-8)
- ▶ ABRAHAM PROCEEDS WITH THE SACRIFICE (22:9-10)
- ▶ THE ANGEL OF THE LORD STOPS ABRAHAM (22:11-12)
- ▶ ABRAHAM SEES A RAM CAUGHT IN A THICKET (22:13)
- ▶ ABRAHAM GIVES A SPECIAL NAME TO THE PLACE (22:14-18)
- ▶ ABRAHAM AND ISAAC RETURN TO THE YOUNG MEN (22:19)
- ▶ ABRAHAM RECEIVES WORD OF HIS BROTHER NAHOR (22:20-24)
- ▶ CONCLUSION

Abraham reacts to this commandment will testify to the measure of faith he possessed. He does not hesitate to obey God, taking supplies needed for the sacrifice, some servants, and his son Isaac. The sensitivity of this man of God is seen in his **immediate** response to the voice of an angel that stopped him from carrying out the sacrifice. At that very instant he saw a ram hung in a thicket by his horns. He offered the ram in Isaac's stead. The angel then appeared a second time to Abraham and delivers a message confirming the promise God had made to Abraham. Abraham and Isaac then returned to Beersheba with the servants, where he remained. At that time he received word about his brother Nahor, and the children he had begotten.

ATTENTION TURNED TO ABRAHAM

Commencing with the twelfth chapter of Genesis, our attention is turned to Abraham and his progeny. Abraham is mentioned one hundred and

fifty-two times in Genesis, eighteen times in Exodus through Deuteronomy, 16 times from Joshua through Psalms, seven times in the Prophets, twenty-seven times in the Gospels, eight times in Acts, and thirty-one times in Romans thru Jude. That is a total of two hundred and fifty-nine times.

Commencing with Abraham God began working specifically toward the coming of Jesus into the world. He prepared an environment in which the coming Savior could grow and, increase in wisdom, and in favor with God and man.

Prior to Abraham, the focus seemed to be to establish the enormity of sin, and the absolute intolerance that God has for it. Therefore we have the epochs of:

- ➡ Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden.
- ➡ Cain being cursed.
- ➡ The flood during which all flesh died.
- ➡ The dispersion at Shinar.
- ➡ The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now God will focus on a man to

whom extraordinary promises would be given – promises that exceeded any given to man prior to the patriarch. If someone cites the promise of the Seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent, it must be remembered that while this would be a blessing to men, the promise itself was not given to men, but to the devil (Gen 3:14-15).

So far as the Scriptural record is concerned, the word "**covenant**" was only spoken to Noah, and that pertained to Noah being saved from the flood, and the fact that God would not destroy the earth with water again (Gen 5:18; 9:9-17). **After God's first called Abraham, the word covenant occurs two hundred and eighty four times in Scripture.**

IT MUST BE TAUGHT

These are things that must be taught, showing that the Scriptures are all about **what God is doing, not what should be doing**. I do not believe these perspectives of the concentrated and focused working of the Lord will be obvious to even the avid Bible reader.

There has been such a distortion of sound perspective that many of these things were not seen for decades by those with a love for the Word of God. They had to first overcome the distortions, slanted perspectives, and

ABRAHAM'S RESPONSES TO GOD

THE WORD OF GOD

- ◆ Leave Ur, father's house, kindred (Gen 12:1).
- ◆ Unto thy seed will I give this land (Gen 12:7).
- ◆ I will give thee all the land thou seest. Rise and walk through the land (Gen 13:13-17).
- ◆ In a vision God told him his heir would come from his own bowels, and his seed many (Gen 15:4-19).
- ◆ At 99 years of age, God confirmed the covenant, to give him the land, gave him the covenant of circumcision, and revealed Sarah would bear the heir, and that Isaac was the heir (Gen 17:1-22).
- ◆ The Lord appeared in three messengers, telling Abraham that he would return the next year, and Sarah would have the promised son (Gen 18:1-15).
- ◆ God revealed that he was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:17-21).
- ◆ God told Abraham to hearken to his wife, and cast out Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:12-13).

ABRAHAM'S RESPONSE

- ◆ So Abraham departed (Gen 12:4).
- ◆ He builded an altar to the Lord (Gen 12:8).
- ◆ Abraham removed his tent, moved to Hebron, built an altar, and began his survey (Gen 13:18).
- ◆ Abraham believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gen 15:6).
- ◆ Abraham took Ishmael, all that were born in his house, every male in the house, and circumcised them on the selfsame day. On that selfsame day he also circumcised himself (Gen 17:23-27).
- ◆ Abraham was not weak in faith, considered not his own body nor the deadness of Sarah's womb, staggered not, and was strong in faith (Rom 19-21).
- ◆ Abraham drew near to and make a fervent plea for the righteous (Gen 18:23-33).
- ◆ Abraham rose up early, and sent Hagar and Ishmael away with provisions (Gen 21:14).

The point I am making here is the entrance of sin did more damage to humanity than can scarcely be comprehended.

skewed interpretations of men before these things became evident to them.

ABRAHAM'S RESPONSES TO GOD

The chart on the previous page lists the responses of Abraham to the Lord's appearances and words to him. These are limited to the first twenty-one chapters of Genesis. I will add to them as we proceed through this book.

Although the time covered in this section of Scripture represents about thirty years, there are only eight immediate involvements of Abraham with the Lord. Prorated over that period of time, this would be one Divine visitation every forty-five months, or once every 3^{3/4} years. If you want to think of it in terms of days, that would

be one Divine communication every 1,368^{3/4} days.

The point I am making here is the entrance of sin did more damage to humanity than can scarcely be comprehended. Those who treat sin lightly are blinded to this fact, and thereby at an incomprehensible disadvantage. It is to be understood that if men do not have some comprehension of what God is doing in Christ Jesus, they will not participate in the benefit of that doing.

In view of these things, the responses of Abraham are most arresting. They were always immediate, even when he was commanded to do very difficult things – sometimes

impossible things. Actions that would not be acceptable in this day of the greatest revelation (asking Sarah to say she was his sister, asking for Eliezer to be the heir, and the events surrounding the birth of Ishmael), **were owing to a lack of revelation, not any hardness of heart or lack of faith.** If a person cannot conclude this from a spiritual appraisal of the situation, then the consideration that there is no record of God being displeased with Abraham ought to compel such a conclusion.

The consistent obedient responses of Abraham are how faith works–i.e. how it responds to Divine directives. That is the reason for the record of Abraham. If men are sluggardly in their responses, it is because they are lacking in faith – and *“without faith, it is impossible to please God”* (Heb 11:6). There is no such thing as a *“faith,”* as the Scriptures use that word, which contradicts the responses of Abraham. If Abraham is an established example of faith, there can be no other conclusion.

GOD DID TEMPT ABRAHAM

Gen 22:1a *“And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham . . .”*

AFTER THESE THINGS

“And it came to pass after these things . . .” That is, all of the events associated with Abraham's involvement with Abimelech.

GOD DID TEMPT ABRAHAM

“ . . . that God did tempt Abraham . . .” Other versions read, *“God tested Abraham,”* ^{NKJV} *“prove Abraham,”* ^{ASV} *“put Abraham to the test,”* ^{BBE} *“tried Abraham,”* ^{YLT} and *“tested Abraham's faith and obedience.”* ^{LIVING}

The word translated *“tempted,”* *“tested,”* or *“proved”* has the following lexical meaning: “1) TO TEST, TRY, PROVE, TEMPT, ASSAY, PUT TO THE PROOF OR TEST 1A) (PIEL) 1A1) TO TEST, TRY 1A2) TO ATTEMPT, ASSAY, TRY 1A3) TO TEST, TRY, PROVE, TEMPT.” ^{STRONG'S}

As used in this text, this Hebrew word is used thirty-three times in Scripture:

- ➔ Gen 22:1 (“prove”)
- ➔ Ex 15:25 (“proved”)
- ➔ Ex 16:4 (“prove”)
- ➔ Ex 18:2 (“tempt”)
- ➔ Ex 18:7 (“tempted”)
- ➔ Ex 20:20 (“prove”)
- ➔ Num 14:22 (“tempted”)
- ➔ Deut 6:16 (“tempt,” “tempted”)
- ➔ Deut 8:3,16 (“prove”)
- ➔ Deut 13:3 (“proveth”)
- ➔ Deut 33:6 (“prove”)
- ➔ Judges 2:22 (“prove”)
- ➔ Judges 3:1,4 (“prove”)
- ➔ Judges 6:39 (“prove”)
- ➔ 1 Sam 17:29 (“proved”)
- ➔ 1 Kgs 10:1 (“prove”)
- ➔ 2 Chron 9:1 (“prove”)
- ➔ 2 Chron 32:31 (“try”)
- ➔ Psa 26:2 (“prove”)
- ➔ Psa 78:18,41,56 (“tempted”)

- ➔ Psa 95:9 (“tempted”)
- ➔ Psa 106:14 (“tempted”)
- ➔ Eccl 2:1 (“prove”)
- ➔ Eccl 7:23 (“proved”)
- ➔ Isa 7:12 (tempt”)
- ➔ Dan 1:12,14 (“prove,” “proved”).

Most of the time, it is God who is doing the trying, testing, or proving. There are some times, however, where men tempted God (Ex 17:2,7; Num 14:22; Deut 6:16; Psa 78:18,41,56; 95:9; Psa 106:14; Isa 7:12). This is something that God does not allow. As it is written, *“Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah”* (Deut 6:16; Matt 4:7).

At one time, God did say to Israel, *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and **prove Me** now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of*

heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal 3:10). The word used here is different, but has much the same meaning: "TO INVESTIGATE, EXAMINE, PROVE." ^{STRONG'S} The idea here is to learn by experience that what God has promised is true.

IT IS GOD'S MANNER TO PROVE OR TEST HIS PEOPLE

This is an important aspect of God: **He is moved to test try, or [prove His people]**. In this, He puts them under stress, adversity, or difficult demands. This is done in order to force what is in them to be expressed – good or evil.

H

➔ **GOD TRIED ISRAEL:** "Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, **that I may prove them**, whether they will walk in my law, or no" (Ex 16:4). "And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come **to prove you**, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." (Ex 20:20)

➔ **JOB WAS TRIED.** "But He knoweth the way that I take: **when he hath tried me**, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10)

➔ **JOSEPH WAS TRIED.** "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: **the word of the LORD tried him.**" (Psa 105:17-19)

➔ **JEREMIAH WAS TRIED.** "But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and **tried mine heart toward thee**: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter." (Jer 12:3)

➔ **HEZEKIAH WAS TRIED.** "This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent

unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, **to try him**, that He might know all that was in his heart." (2 Chr 32:30-31)

➔ **PHILLIP WAS TRIED.** "When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? **And this he said to prove him:** for He Himself knew what He would do." (John 6:6)

➔ **BELIEVERS ARE TRIED.** "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for

This is not a popular message, but it is a necessary one. Some men have concocted a theology that represents God as standing aloof from men. Others present God as one who looks a person into salvation, which means there is no need for trial. Still, others have a view of Divine love that does not allow for rigorous testing – trying like Abraham will experience.

THE TEST MAY NOT APPEAR TO BE A TEST

It requires some degree of "spiritual understanding" to discern when God is testing men. To the casual observer, it might have appeared that

Hezekiah's test looked like an opportunity to openly share how God had blessed him. However, it was a test, and he was judged for responding in an unacceptable manner

when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12). "That **the trial of your faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:7).

➔ **THE RIGHTEOUS ARE TRIED.** "The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth." (Psa 11:5)

➔ **DISCERNING PEOPLE KNOW GOD TRIES THEM.** "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but **God, which trieth our hearts.**" (1 Thess 2:4)

➔ **THE GODLY WANT GOD TO TRY THEM.** "Examine me, O LORD, and **prove me; try my reins and my heart**" (Psa 26:2). "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts." (Psa 139:23)

Job merely fell on hard times, bad weather patterns, and being a victim of evading hordes of men. Some might have concluded that the manna sent to Israel was mainly a display of God's care for them. God said it was to test them (Deut 8:16). Joseph might have been seen as a victim of malice and lies instead of a person God was testing (Psa 105:19).

Hezekiah's test looked like an opportunity to openly share how God had blessed him. However, it was a test, and he was judged for responding in an unacceptable manner (1 Chron 32:30-31).

It is possible that God tests a person's faith by allowing him to come into sudden riches and prosperity. Maybe it is an avalanche of responsibility that looks like an impossibility. It could be the sudden death of a loved one, or some debilitating disease, or the sudden loss of everything one owns. Maybe it is the rejection of one's religious peers, or false reports raised at a most inopportune time. **All tests do not**

appear to be tests. Men may be moved to label them as “bad luck,” or “good luck,” or things just not working out. But we must not fall into such traps of thinking. **We must assist one another to have clear thinking about unusual blessings, or difficult adversities.**

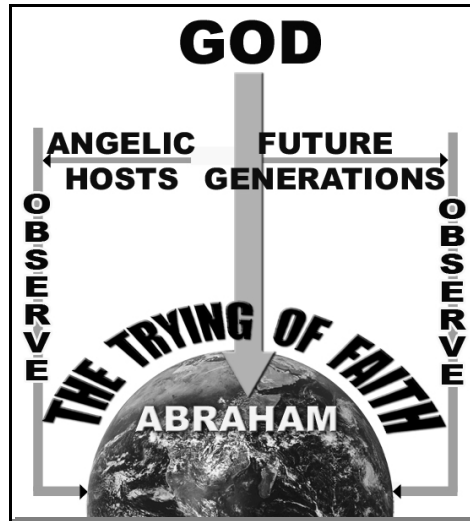
Actually, everything should be ultimately traced back to God. We know this is the case by revelation: *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do”* (Heb 4:13). That is who God is: *“Him with whom we have to do!”* Other versions read, *“Him to whom we must give account,”* ^{NKJV} *“We must answer to him,”* ^{GWN} *“with whom is our reckoning,”* ^{YLT} *“to whom we must explain all that we have done,”* ^{LIVING} *“to whom we must give a word of explanation,”* ^{ISV} and *“explain the way we have lived.”* ^{ERV}

Part of explaining the way we have lived, as some versions read, is **giving an account of our reasoning process.** Did we live and assess life with God as our primary consideration, or did we focus on ourselves? That certainly is something to think about.

In this passage it will become clear that Abraham’s thoughts centered in God Himself. That is why he was alert, and able to respond to a word from heaven in a timely manner.

ABRAHAM PUT TO THE TEST

In our text, God is putting Abraham to the test. It is not because God does not know Abraham, for He said earlier of Abraham, *“I know him”* (Gen 18:19). **However, there is more involved in the works of God than mere men, or what is observable to men.** Indeed, future generations would



certainly profit from the record of this trying or testing of Abraham’s faith. **The resiliency of faith will be confirmed – how it stands tall in the gale of Divine testing.** However, it is not enough to merely hear a word about this. Because of man’s tendency to theorize about

things, God throws His people into the refiner’s pot to show that **faith is as real as the One who gives it.** It will hold up under unimaginable stress and testing, in which men can learn something about God Himself.

Although the Lord knows all things, **He wants those He has created to have some understanding of His ways.** If God is going to have *“fellowship”* (1 John 1:3) with those with whom He works favorably, it will not be in an environment of darkness or blindness. He has told His people, *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7). This is to be understood

against the backdrop of another statement God had recorded: *“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”* (Jer 9:23-24). The amplified Bible reads, *“But let him who glories glory in this: that he understands and knows Me [personally and practically, directly discerning and recognizing My character], that I am the Lord, Who practices loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.”*

Pharaoh may not learn of God in His dealings with him, but Moses will. That is as the Lord intends. As difficult as it may seem, God intends for some people to learn from **their** experience. For others, like Pharaoh, Sihon, Og, Balak, etc., they are raised up as exhibits from whom others may learn.

While this may appear to be very simplistic, proportionately **few professing “Christians” think about the comprehension or understanding of God Himself.** They appear unaware that eternal life is knowing God (John 17:3), and that Jesus will take vengeance on all those who do not know God (2 Thess 1:8).

The trying of one’s faith is associated with the knowledge of God, and an acquaintance with His ways. That is, these things are recognized. It is true that in **trials we can learn much about ourselves. However, that must be put under the larger consideration learning Christ and God.**

ABRAHAM SAID, “HERE AM I”

^{22:1b} *“ . . . and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.”* Other versions read, *“Lo! I am here,”* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *“Ready!”* ^{NAB} *“Yes Lord?”*

^{LIVING} *“Lo! I am here,”* ^{BRENTON} *“Yes!”* ^{ERV} and *“I’m listening.”* ^{MESSAGE}

This is the first times these words

(*“Here am I”*) occur in the Scriptures – and it is after Abraham had walked with a keen consciousness of God for over twenty-five years. Others who

responded to the voice of the Lord with these words include **Jacob** (Gen 31:11; 46:2), **Moses** (Ex 3:4), **Isaiah** (Isa 6:8), and young **Samuel** (1 Sam 3:4). By comparison, the first response of Saul

about this time" (1 Kgs 19:2).

Upon hearing this, Elijah *"arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba."* It was there that the

It was because he had a sensitive heart, and was able to hear the voice of God above the noise or a destroying wind, a ravaging earthquake, and a raging fire, to say nothing of the belching threats of Jezebel!

of Tarsus to a Divine voice was, *"Who art Thou, Lord"* (Acts 9:5).

In this we see something of the **spiritual sensitivity of Abraham**. He lived in such a manner as to be ready immediately to recognize the voice of the Lord. **That is what faith does, for it always takes note of the words and directives of the Lord, developing an acute consciousness within the individual.** Those who live by faith know what that means.

Those who do not live in this manner – unto and for the Lord (2 Cor 5:15) – are slow to recognize the call and working of the Lord. Their senses have **not** been exercised to readily discern good and evil (Heb 5:14). This moves them to respond to both benefits and hardships in a hasty and carnal manner. They are quick to blame others, and tend to overestimate their own worthiness.

We have an excellent example of spiritual sensitivity in one of the experiences of the prophet Elijah. He had been wearied by the slaying of four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18:40). It is quite possible that he also slew an additional four hundred *"prophets of the grove"* that had been called to participate in the challenge of who was really God (1 Kgs 18:19). After hearing of these things, Jezebel, wife to Ahab the king, sent a message to Elijah saying, *"So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow*

mighty, but weary, prophet said to the Lord, *"It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers"* (1 Kgs 19:4). The Lord gave him no answer, but sent an angel who awakened him and told him to get up and eat and drink. After doing so, Elijah fell asleep. The angel awakened him the second time and said, *"And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee"* (1 Kgs 19:7).

The journey was a long one, indeed. After eating a miraculous meal provided by the angel, it is written, *"And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God."* (1 Kgs 19:8).

It was here at Horeb, where the Law had been given, that Elijah responded to the Lord asking him what he was doing there, *"I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away"* (1 Kgs 19:10). The Lord then told him, *"Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD"* (1 Kgs 19:11).

It was during this time that the sensitivity of Elijah surfaced in a most wonderful way. The account is as follows: *"And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind*

rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire A STILL SMALL VOICE. And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, *What doest thou here, Elijah?"* (1 Kgs 19:11-13). Elijah immediately replied with the same words he had spoken to the angel during the first of this episode (1 Kgs 19:14).

As though ignoring what Elijah said, the Lord directed him to go the wilderness of Damascus, and there *"anoint Hazael to be king over Syria"* (1 Kgs 19:15). He was then to anoint Jehu *"to be king over Israel"* (1 Kgs 19:16a), and also anoint Elisha who would replace him in his prophetic office (1 Kgs 19:16b). The Lord also told him, *"Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him"* (1 Kgs 19:18).

How is it that Elijah detected that "still small voice?" How was he able to depart and do all that the Lord had commanded him to do – even after very depleting experiences? **It was because he had a sensitive heart, and was able to hear the voice of God above the noise or a destroying wind, a ravaging earthquake, and a raging fire, to say nothing of the belching threats of Jezebel!**

But it is not enough to merely know that Elijah reacted in this manner. **The people of God must be able to transition from this event to their own circumstances.** Have they lived in a manner that dulled their hearing, or made it more keen? Have their circumstances dimmed their eyes or brightened them? Have they cultured their souls to respond immediately to God like Abraham, or are they *"slow of heart to believe"* (Lk 24:25). Let every person judge their own selves.

TAKE THY SON, THINE ONLY SON, WHOM THOU LOVEST

"² And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

TAKE NOW THY SON

"And he said, Take now thy son..."

God does not tell Abraham to see if Isaac would be **amenable** to going with him. He was not to inquire about the **possibility** of Isaac accompanying him. He was solemnly told to **"take"** him. There was not the slightest hint that this would difficult to do, or was to be considered to be arduous.

Among other things, this gives us an idea about how Isaac was reared. He was obviously easy to correctly direct. He had a respect for his father, and would not hesitate to do what he said.

We should point out that Isaac, at this point, was not a little boy. This was after Abraham had made the agreement with Abimelech (Gen 21:23-32), had planted a grove (Gen 21:33), and after he had sojourned "in the Philistine's land many days," or *"for a long time"* ^{NIV} (Gen 21:34).

Although his age is not specified, it appears obvious that he was not a fledgling boy (see the text box entitled "On the Age of Isaac."

THINE ONLY SON

"... thine only son Isaac..."

Other versions read, *"your only son Isaac,"* ^{CSB} *"your favored one,"* ^{TNK} and *"thy son, thine only one."* ^{YLT}

From the Standpoint of Nature

From the standpoint of nature, Isaac was not Abraham's *"only son"*.

➔ *It is written, "And Hagar bare **Abram** a son: and **Abram** called his son's name, which Hagar bare, **Ishmael**." (Gen 16:15)*

➔ *"Abraham took **Ishmael his son** . . . and circumcised . . . "Ishmael his son was thirteen old, when he was circumcised" (Gen 17:23,25).*

➔ *"In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and **Ishmael his son**." (Gen 17:26).*

➔ *"Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. And **his sons Isaac and Ishmael** buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite,*

However, this is not the manner of Divine reasoning. **Rather than His decisions and evaluations being established according to the laws of men, they are determined by His own immutable and Sovereign purpose.** It really makes no difference what men think about it. "Many times," the Scripture affirmed, Israel *"provoked"* God *"with THEIR counsel"* (Psa 106:43). The Living God never proceeds to work within the framework of human counsel. It is written of Him, *"With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him*

So far as God was concerned, Abraham had only one son – the one that entered the world according to the purpose of God, and by His power and enablement. God's purpose would be executed through Isaac, not Ishmael.

which is before Mamre" (Gen 25:8-9).

➔ *"Now these are the generations of **Ishmael, Abraham's son**, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham" (Gen 25:12).*

➔ *"Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of **Ishmael Abraham's son**, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife" (Gen 28:9).*

Now we come to the manner in which the Lord reckons, or reasons. From the standpoint of this world and nature, if we were to present this case in any legal courtroom, there would be a unanimous decision that Ishmael was, in fact, Abraham's son. In fact, he would be seen as Abraham's first son, with all of the legal rites pertaining to that status.

knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?" (Isa 40:14).

Again, the counsel of God is the determining counsel (Acts 2:23), not the counsel of men. It is expressly stated, *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"* (Eph 1:11).

So far as God was concerned, Abraham had only one son – the one that entered the world according to the purpose of God, and by His power and enablement. God's purpose would be executed through Isaac, not Ishmael. **So far as God was concerned, Abraham had only one son** – the one that entered the world according to the purpose of God, and by His power and enablement. God's purpose would be executed through Isaac, not Ishmael.

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that entered the world according to the purpose of God, and by His power and enablement. God's purpose would be executed through Isaac, not Ishmael.

An Application to the Human Race

So far as God is concerned, those who are not in Christ are *"not a people"* (1 Pet 2:10). *"The sons of God"* are not born through natural means – of the flesh. Therefore John wrote of Jesus, *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"* (John 1:12-13). No one is properly referred to as a *"son of God"* who is not in Christ Jesus. Such people are exclusively God's *"sons"* (1 John 3:1-2), His *"household"* (Eph 2:19), His *"family"* (Eph 3:15), and *"the people of God"* (1 Pet 2:10).

WHOM THOU LOVEST

" . . . whom thou lovest . . . "
Other versions read, *"your dearly beloved,"* ^{BBE} *"whom thou hast loved,"*
^{SEPTUAGINT} *"your beloved Isaac,"* ^{NJB} *"your favored one, Isaac, whom you love,"* ^{TNK}
"whom you love so much," ^{LIVING} *"the beloved one, whom thou hast loved,"*
^{BRENTON} *"the one you dearly love,"* ^{CEV} and
"whom you love so much." ^{GNB}

Was it that Abraham did not love Ishmael? Indeed not, for he had asked God that Ishmael might live under His blessing, even though he was not the promised heir (Gen 17:18). Furthermore, God had heard Abraham's request and answered, *"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation"* (Gen 17:20).

However, Abraham's love for Isaac was greater, and of a different kind, than his care for Ishmael.

A Point To Be Made

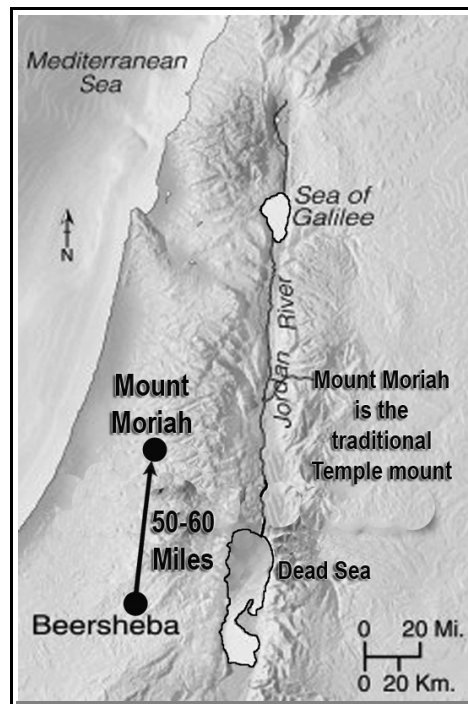
Do not imagine that the Lord will always ask you to do, what appears to be, reasonable things, easy things, and

things that immediately appear crystal clear! He may ask some to sell everything they have, giving it to the poor (Lk 18:22). One might have to choose between Jesus and his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and his own life (Lk 14:26). Peter, Andrew, James, and John had to leave their business (Matt 4:18-22). Matthew had to leave his occupation (Matt 9:9).

The redeemed will soon find out they have not been called to a leisurely and irresponsible life!

GET TO THE LAND OF MORIAH

" . . . and get thee into the land of Moriah . . . "



The distance from Beersheba to the *"land of Moriah,"* is generally understood to be 50-60 miles away – a mountain range which was a three-day journey. Mount Moriah, was located there. **Those who seek convenience in the matter of obedience must take note of the strenuous nature of this test.** Not only was Abraham commanded to offer his *"only son,"* whom he loved, but he had to expend a lot of effort to do so (Gen 22:3). He had to:

➡ Rise up early the next day.

- ➡ Saddle his ass.
- ➡ Get two young men to go with him and Isaac.
- ➡ Get Isaac.
- ➡ Cut the wood for the burnt offering.
- ➡ Complete the three day journey.

The Mount to Which He Journeyed

This same mountain is the place where David was commanded by Gad the prophet to build an altar unto the Lord (2 Sam 24:18). This command was given in order to *"stay"* the plague that had resulted from David numbering Israel – a plague in which seventy thousand men died from Dan to Beersheba (2 Sam 4:15). It was at this place that David prayed to the Lord, asking that the plague be stayed (2 Sam 24:17). David purchased the area, *"the threshing floor of Araunah,"* built the altar, offered offerings to the Lord, and the plague was stayed, being limited to the death of seventy-thousand men (2 Sam 24:19-25).

ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS

" . . . upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Just as when Abraham was called out of Ur of Chaldees to go to a particular land, the details of the destination would be revealed along the way.

A Divine Manner

This is a peculiar aspect of God's dealings with men that is not commonly known. The fact that God makes known the details of His will while men are engaged in doing His will, is made known in several cases.

- ➡ Abraham's call to go to Canaan (Gen 12:1).
- ➡ Abraham's journey to the mountain on which he was to offer Isaac (Gen 22:2).
- ➡ Joseph's call to Egypt (Psa 105:17-22).
- ➡ Israel's exodus from Egypt to the promised land, attended by guiding pillars of cloud and fire (Ex 13:21-22).

- ➔ God's promise to David concerning Divine guidance (Psa 32:8).
- ➔ Jesus' instruction of His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power (Lk 24:49).
- ➔ Paul's call to the apostleship (Acts 9:6).
- ➔ The call, Paul and those with him to Macedonia (Acts 16:9-12).
- ➔ Paul's call to Rome (Acts 23:11).

Many people are confused about how to live because they are not about doing their Father's business. They do not know that Divine direction postulates being in the will of God. This is because outside the circumference of His will, there is no sensitivity to God's presence or well.

Mount Moriah

We understand that this mountain was later identified as "*Mount Moriah*" – a tribute to this most sacred occasion.

Later, we are told that Solomon built the Temple at this precise location. *"Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite"* (2 Chron 3:1). It is understood that "*Ornan*" and "*Araunah*" are variations of the same name. In reference to this incident, the Chronicles use the name "*Ornan*" (1 Chron 21:15-29; 23:1). The name "*Araunah*" is used in the earlier book of Second Samuel (2 Sam 24:16-24).

Like Sinai, this mountain was noted throughout history. Jerusalem was built in the area, and the Temple on the mountain peak. **This is also where God sacrificed His Son for the sins of the world.**

With both Abraham and God, the sacrifice had to be made on a high place. This is also a requirement for the sacrifices we make. They must be made on a high and lofty place, where the will

of the Lord is dominate, and the awareness of His Presence is prominent.

- ➔ The presentation of our bodies to God as a "*living sacrifice*" (Rom 12:1-2).
- ➔ Sacrifices that supply needs to the saints of God (Phil 4:18).
- ➔ Sacrifices of praise (Heb 13:15).

Such offerings are not acceptable in places where the flesh has the priority and the world is outstanding. I am persuaded many modern day "worshippers" have no awareness of this. Much of the "praise and worship" of our time has the stench of flesh upon it, both in sound and in appearance.

OFFER HIM THERE

" . . . and offer him there for a burnt offering . . . "

ON THE AGE OF ISAAC

"Several commentators have weighed in on this question. *Leupold* wrote: 'He may by this time have arrived at the age of some eighteen to twenty years' (1942, 1:625). *Josephus* stated: 'Now Isaac was twenty-five years old' (1.13.2). *Adam Clarke* said: 'It is more probable that he was now about thirty-three' (1:140, emp. in orig.). *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown* asserted that Isaac was 'then upwards of twenty years of age' (n.d., p. 29). *J. Curtis Manor* described him as 'a youth of sufficient strength and agility to carry a load of firewood up a mountainside' (1994, p. 103). *Keil and Delitzsch* affirmed that 'this son had grown into a young man' (1976, 1:248). *Morris* added: 'The meaning in Isaac's case should also be 'young man.'" (1976, p. 373).

This is the second reference to a "*burnt offering*" in Scripture. The first reference was to Noah offering "*burnt offerings*" on the altar following the flood. They consisted of representatives of "*every clean beast, and of every clean fowl*" (Gen 8:20). The next mention is found at the time Israel was delivered from Egypt, about five hundred years later (Ex 18:12). Because this was a relatively "*new thing*," from a human point of view, it was all the more difficult. So far as the record is concerned, and aside from the example

of Noah several hundred years earlier, Abraham did not have any precedent for a "*burnt offering*," or an "*offering made by fire*" (Ex 29:18). In fact, prior to this text, as already noted, the **only** mention of "*fire*" pertained to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24). The next mention of "*fire*" pertained to an event taking place hundreds of years later, when "*the angel of the LORD appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed*" (Ex 3:2).

I understand that this does not mean Abraham was unacquainted with "*fire*," or with "*burnt offerings*." **However, that acquaintance was not within the context of a recorded revelation of the will of God – at least, not so far as the Scriptural record is concerned.**

What Abraham Was Required to Do

What Abraham was told to do could not be done while dominated by distress. A heavy heart of sadness would also be a great hindrance. **A person who is ruled by emotion would find this an impossible task to fulfill.** There had to be a higher kind of motivation than mere determination and resolution.

We can learn from this that what God requires us to do demands something more than natural aptitude. This, of course, is by design, and is in order that God might receive all the glory, for even willingness and obedience. Thus is it written, "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure*" (Phil 2:13).

I do not doubt that the devil hurled all manner of temptation at the patriarch – although, if he did, it was not above what Abraham was able to bear, for God would not allow that to happen (1 Cor 10:13). **Abraham, however was noted for believing in the Lord**, and therefore he overcame the devil's temptations. That is what faith – real faith – empowers a person to do – it is what faith does!

We must see the superiority of faith, and why it is that it always, and without fail, overcomes the world –

which is a matter of revelation (1 John 5:4-5). **Faith never loses or is defeated!** It never misleads or misdirects. It

always responds favorably to Divine mandates. Now, let us behold how Abraham responds to the Lord.

AND ABRAHAM ROSE UP EARLY, AND WENT TO THE PLACE

“³ And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. ⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.”

ABRAHAM ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING

“And Abraham rose up early in the morning . . .” Other versions read, *“Early the next morning,”* ^{NIV} *Abraham rising up in the night”* ^{DOUAY}

Behold the aggressiveness of faith! Abraham does not rise at a convenient time, but is eager to get to the business of obeying God. This is the consistent response of faith.

WHAT ABRAHAM DID

“ . . . and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him . . .”

Saddled His Ass

He prepared his donkey for riding, which involved wrapping something

any visible evidence of difficulty. He had to do this with some composure so that Isaac would remain at peace. Behold also how instantly Isaac responded – quite unlike the manner of the Western self-centered world.

Clave the Wood for the Burnt Offering

Other versions read, *“split the wood,”* ^{NKJV} *“cut the wood,”* ^{NRSV} *“chopped wood,”* ^{NJB} *“cut up,”* ^{RWB} and *“cleaveth.”* ^{YLT}

This must have been a sizeable task. Remember, Abraham was to offer Isaac as a *“burnt offering”* to the Lord. The amount of wood, and the kind of wood, was critical, to this task. Even in our time, the consumption of a human body by fire is a challenging task. Those who practice this heathen custom for the dead have invented special furnaces for the task that are heated to extremely high temperatures. Thus, it seems to me, that Abraham had to be selective of the kind of wood he chose. It appears that it must needs be a hard wood that would burn hot, and remain on fire for a time. At any rate, the patriarch did this early in the morning, setting out on a 50-60 mile journey immediately after that. In all of this, Abraham did not present a single question to the Lord.

Rose Up and Went

With godly deliberation and the determination of faith, Abraham set out to do what God had commanded him to do. Whatever emotional factors were involved with this action are not mentioned. Furthermore, those who make much of such possibilities, saying they do not know how any man could do this, or how it would be difficult for them to do it, have only managed to obscure the potency of the event. They have pulled our eyes toward the earth, and revealed their own dullness.

From a human point of view, this must have been a difficult thing to do – but Abraham did it, apparently without any visible evidence of difficulty.

As with Paul the apostle, when the call of God came, Abraham did not confer with flesh and blood (Gal 1:16). **In faith he proceeded immediately to do what God had commanded.**

The word *“morning”* means *“break of day,”* ^{STRONG'S} when the darkness is first dissipated. The prefix *“early”* signifies that it was at the very beginning of the morning, when it was probably still dark. Using the same kind of language, the record of Mary Magdalene coming to the tomb reads as follows, *“The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher”* (John 20:1). It is quite possible that Abraham rose while it was *“yet dark.”*

firmly about the animal, binding it, and making it safe for travel.

Took Two of His Young Men

These were probably among the 300 + servants that Abraham had. They were no doubt competent men who assisted in carrying the needed supplies to the place appointed for the sacrifice. They would also be witnesses of a sort. We know from the full account, that these two young men did not know the nature of the mission. Then again, as Jesus Himself said, *“the servant knoweth not what the lord doeth”* (John 15:15).

Took Isaac His Son

From a human point of view, this must have been a difficult thing to do – but Abraham did it, apparently without

ON THE THIRD DAY

"Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off."

Somewhere between the beginning of the journey and this time,

themselves new believers, and had not been exposed to much teaching, Paul wrote, *"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall*

His body, the church, He directs them to glory, where they shall be forever with the Lord.

Of course, if the appointed destiny of the saints of God is not told to them, and of their affection is not set on

OCCURRENCES OF THE WORD "WORSHIP" IN THE EPISTLES

Most of the references in Revelation have to do with the worship of the beast. After the demise of the beast, it refers to the worship, of God.

KJV, NKJV, ASV	ESV	NASB	NIV	NRSV	RSV
Rom 1:25 1 Cor 14:25 Phil 3:3 Col 2:23 2 Thess 2:4 Heb 1:6; 10:2; 11:21 Rev 3:9; 4:10; 5:14; 7:11 9:20; 11:1,16; 13:4,8,12, 15; 14:7,9,11; 15:4; 16:2 19:4,10,20; 20:4,8,9	Rom 9:4; 12:1 1 Cor 14:25; Phil 3:3 Col 2:18 2 Thess 2:4 Heb 1:6; 9:1,21; 11:21; 12:28 Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:1,16; 13:4,8,12,15; 14:7; 15:4; 16:2; 19:4,10, 20; 20:3; 22:3,8,9	Rom 1:25; 12:1 1 Cor 14:25 Phil 3:3 Col 2:18 2 Thess 2:4 Heb 1:6; 9:1,6,9; 10:2; 11:21; Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 9:20; 11:1,16; 13:4,8,12 15; 14:7,9,11; 15:4; 16:2 19:4,10,20; 20:4; 22:8,9	Rom 9:4; 12:1 1 Cor 14:25 Phil 3:3 Col 2:18,23 1 Tim 2:10 Heb 1:6; 9:1; 10:1; 12:28	Rom 9:4; 12:1 1 Cor 10:14; 14:25 Phil 3:3 Col 2:18 2 Thess 2:4 2 Tim 1:3 Heb 1:6; 8:5; 9:1, 14,21; 11:21; 12:28	Rom 1:25; 9:4; 12:1 1 Cor 14:25 Phil 3:3 Col 2:18 2 Thess 2:4 1 Tim 2:10 Heb 1:6; 9:1,9; 10:2; 11:21; 12:28 Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 9:20; 11:1; 13:4,8,12,15; 14:7,9, 11; 15:4; 16:2; 19:4,10,20; 20:4; 22:8,9

the Lord had revealed the intended destination to Abraham – He said, *"one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."* How He told Abraham about this mountain is not known – but He did. That is how Abraham knew.

An Application

It is God's manner to give men an idea of where they are going, **then elaborate on it while they are en route.** For example, when Peter preached the Gospel to Cornelius and those gathered at his house, he said of Jesus, *"And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead"* (Acts 10:42). To the Corinthians, who were *"in Christ,"* but were certainly not mature, Paul wrote, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Cor 5:10). To the Thessalonians, who were

descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:15-17).

As these brethren commenced the life of faith, living by faith and walking in the Spirit, they would receive more information about the coming of the Lord, the day of judgment, and how to properly prepare for those scheduled events.

That is how the Lord Jesus is *"bringing many sons to glory"* (Heb 2:10). After they avail themselves of the *"new and living way"* that He has *"opened"* for them (Heb 10:20), through *"apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers,"* together with the mutual edification of

things above, and not on things on the earth (Col 3:1-2), it is absurd to even think that the exalted Christ will lead them to glory. That would be like Abraham remaining in Ur of the Chaldees, and receiving a map that detailed the way to Canaan. Or, more to the point of this text, it would be like Abraham remaining in Beersheba for a lengthy period of time, yet receiving from the Lord the details of the trip to *"the land of Moriah,"* and the specific mountain on which he was to offer Isaac – at a time that would be convenient for him.

If it is difficult to think of Abraham being so directed, it should be exceedingly difficult to imagine that this is the way the Lord brings sons to glory. **Yet, many are living as though a kind of impersonal direction exists today.** They remain firmly ensconced in the flesh, waiting for directions from heaven, while neither their eyes nor their heart is set there.

I AND THE LAD WILL GO YONDER AND WORSHIP

"⁵ And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass;

and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

Here is a text that testifies loudly to the strength of *"the faith of*

Abraham” (Rom 4:16). Keep in mind that Abraham’s faith was not a unique faith, given only to him. **Rather, it is an example of the faith all have who are in Christ Jesus – a faith that is “obtained”** (2 Pet 1:1). This faith surfaced during the most difficult trial Abraham had faced to this point – and possibly, ever faced. Of course, that is what real faith does under stress – it rises to the surface, becoming not only evident, but prominent. **Where faith is not present, unbelief comes forward, assuming the throne of the heart, and being dominant.**

ABIDE HERE

“And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass...”

“Two young men” were with Abraham and Isaac. **They only need a word from Abraham, and they will obey him, doing precisely what he has said.** God had said Abraham would “command his children and his household,” and that they would “keep the way of the Lord and judgment” (Gen 18:19). In demonstration of that truth, here is Abraham’s child, and two members of his household. **They will do just as the Lord said.**

I AND THE LAD WILL GO YONDER AND WORSHIP

“ . . . and I and the lad will go yonder and worship . . . ”

This is the first time the word “worship,” in any of its varied forms, occurs in the Scriptures.

What a word is this! Abraham knows that he is going to offer his son as a burnt offering to God. **Yet he refers to it as worshipping God. The act itself would constitute worship offered to God.** That certainly enhances the meaning of the expression “sacrifice of praise” (Heb 13:15). **Of course, that is precisely what obedience is – it is an act of worship.** At this juncture in history, and throughout the period of the Law, “worship” was associated with **doing** something specific. For those with faith, it did involve an attitude of the heart.

In Christ

That obedience is an act of worship is seen in an exhortation to believers concerning a sacrifice they are to make. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, **which is your reasonable service**”* (Rom 12:1). Other versions read, *“which is your spiritual; **service of worship**,”* NIV *“it is the logical **“Temple worship”** for you,”* CJB *“this is your **spiritual worship**,”* CSB *“This kind of **worship** is appropriate for you,”* GWN *“this is your spiritual {Or reasonable} **act of worship**,”* NIB *“This is true worship from you,”* IE *“This with you will be an act of **reasonable worship**,”* WEYMOUTH *“this is the **reasonable way for you to worship**,”* ISV *“which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) **service and spiritual worship**.”* AMPLIFIED

The word translated “service” is the Greek word λατρείαν, which has the following lexical meaning: “RELIGIOUS

read, *“Temple worship,”* NIV *“the worship,”* NRSV *“the true worship,”* GWN *“the worship of God.”* NJB **Prior to the Law, and under the Law itself, the worship of God was largely an ordained and commanded routine.** There were exceptions, but precious few of them.

It is interesting to observe that Jesus, when He was tempted of the devil, used this word “serve” together with “worship.” *“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt **worship** (προσκυνᾷς) the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou **serve** (λατρεύεις, from λατρεύω)”* (Luke 4:8). There, the word “worship” refers to not bowing down to Satan, which he had requested: *“And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me”* (Matt 4:9).

In Moses and the Prophets, the word “worship” in all of its varied forms, occurs one hundred and nine

From one point of view, under the Law, the sin offering was the forfeiture of life. Under grace, it is the sanctification of life. One was an act on a specific occasion (Old), the other (New) was not confined to an occasion, but was a manner of life.

SERVICE, WORSHIP (OF GOD),” STRONG’S “IN THE GREEK BIBLE, THE SERVICE OF WORSHIP OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LEVITICAL LAW,” THAYER “IN THE NT RELIGIOUS SERVICE BASED IN WORSHIP SERVICE (OF GOD), DIVINE SERVICE, WORSHIP,” FRIBERG AND “PERFORM RELIGIOUS RITES AS A PART OF WORSHIP, TO PERFORM RELIGIOUS RITES TO WORSHIP, TO VENERATE, WORSHIP.” LOUW-NIDA

This is the same Greek word that is used to describe the Tabernacle/Temple system of worship: *“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and **the service of God**, and the promises”* (Rom 9:4). Other versions

times in the King James Version – only three times in Genesis (22:5; 24:26,48); one hundred and three times in the New King James; 110 times in the New American Standard; 171 times in the New International; 109 in the Revised Standard; 156 in the New Revised Standard. **It is nearly always associated with a specific act at a specific time** – such as is described in our text. It is interesting to observe that as time moved forward, the translators were more free with their use of the word “worship.”

“Worship” in the New Covenant

In comparing the worship of God

under grace with that which was under the Law, the sacrifice of a life was viewed as a *“living sacrifice”* – like the scape goat (Lev 16:8-10), and the freed bird under the Law (Lev 14:6-7). **From one point of view, under the Law, the sin offering was the forfeiture of life. Under grace, it is the sanctification of life.** One was an act on a specific occasion (Old), the other (New) was not confined to an occasion, but was a manner of life. There is also a sense, from the standpoint of self-interest, in which our life is forfeited (Lk 14:26; Gal 2:20).

Thus, Abraham viewed the offering up of Isaac as an act of worship. You see how faith made him God-centered in his thinking, not self-centered.

AND COME AGAIN TO YOU

“ . . . and come again to you.”

Other versions read, *“we will come back to you,”* NASB *“will return to you,”* DOUAY *“and then come right back,”* LIVING *“Then we will come back to you later.”* ERV

Observe the boldness of faith. The patriarch does not merely think this, or say within himself, *“I hope I will be able to return with Isaac.”* he makes a bold and public announcement that he and Isaac will return to them.

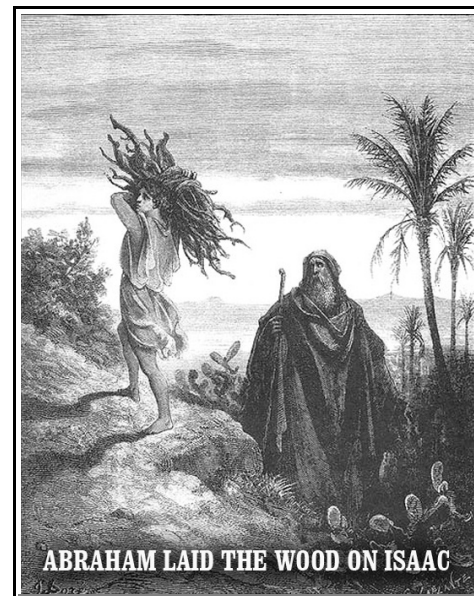
In the letter to Hebrew believers, the Holy Spirit confirms how Abraham thought at this time. It was the

reasoning of faith, clear and simply. *“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure”* (Heb 11:17-19).

When it is said that Abraham *“offered up Isaac,”* and *“offered up his only begotten son,”* it is speaking of Abraham’s resolve and determination. **There is no question but that he would have carried the sacrifice out to the finest detail, and to the commanded outcome.** In this case his determination, dictated by his faith, equated to the actual carrying out of the command.

This will be seen more clearly as we proceed through this text. Abraham’s action became evidence to the angel dispatched from heaven. **Once he was convinced the deed would be carried it, he halted the activity.**

This also is something of what is involved in God looking upon the heart (1 Sam 16:7; 1 Kgs 8:39; Psa 9:7; Jer 11:20; 17:10; Acts 1:24; Rev 2:23). What He sees in the heart is credited to the individual, whether it was expressed in a deed or not. Sometimes people are not able to do what they desire – such as stopping the fiery darts, or tempting thoughts, of the wicked one from being



hurled at them (Eph 6:16; Rom 7:23; 2 Cor 10:4-5). Also, we have the example of some in Corinth who desired to give much to an offering for the poor saints at Jerusalem, but were not able to do so. Paul wrote to such, *“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not”* (2 Cor 8:12). The Amplified Bible reads, *“For if the [eager] readiness to give is there, then it is acceptable and welcomed in proportion to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.”*

This principle is seen in our text in a most wonderful way. It also opens to us a most refreshing consideration.

ABRAHAM PREPARES FOR THE SACRIFICE

“⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? ⁸ And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.”

ABRAHAM TOOK THE WOOD, FIRE, AND KNIFE

“And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together . . .”

From one point of view – the lower view – it was a heart-rending sight. Abraham has brought Isaac to offer him to God as a burnt offering, and the boy does not know it. He will

have to carry the wood up the mountain that is intended to be the bed on which he will lay as an offering to God. Additionally, Abraham has to carry the fire and the knife with his own hands as they go up the mountain. From earth’s point of view, this was a most difficult task. **However, this is not the view we should adopt.**

We should rather see the willingness and submissiveness of faith to whatever God requires of the person

possessing it. **The man of God, now about 120-130, and having developed a deep affection for Isaac, does not balk at what God has required of him.** He does not plead for Isaac as he did for the righteous when he knew God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.

We are not only witnessing what faith will compel a person to do, but are also seeing the calmness and total reliance upon God that characterizes it from beginning to end. This is what *"the faith of God's elect"* (Tit 1:1) is like. **Any other kind of faith is no faith at all.** It is spurious, of the flesh, and of no account before God.

WHERE IS THE LAMB FOR A BURNT OFFERING

We are not only witnessing what faith will compel a person to do, but are also seeing the calmness and total reliance upon God that characterizes it from beginning to end.

"And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

The Scriptures make only one mention of a *"burnt offering"* before this occasion, and that is when Noah *"builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar"* (Gen 8:20). There is no record of God commanding *"burnt offerings,"* and no other recorded example of such between Noah and Abraham.

We are not told how Noah chose to offer burnt offerings to the Lord. We conclude that this was not an idea that originated with him, but that it had been communicated to him by God Himself. It is inconceivable that the Lord would accept an offering invented by men.

All of this highlights the faithfulness of the patriarchs of old. They passed along to each generation what they knew of the Lord, and of the manner of sacrifices presented to Him. **In our generation, and the two or three before it, much of the personal knowledge of the Lord has been lost.** We now have a generation that knows very little about the Lord at all, to say nothing of His nature and requirements. Absorbed with living for self, what was known of God has all but perished in the earth – even though in Christ what can be known of the Lord has been brought to an unprecedented level. Men have managed to duplicate the situation found in Israel: *"Therefore My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honorable*

men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst" (Isa 5:13). Again, the Lord spoke through Hosea, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children"* (Hosea 4:6). They had no understanding (Isa 27:11), and *"did not know the judgment of God"* (Jer 8:7).

The Israel during the days of the prophets, had available to them the knowledge gained by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, and David. Yet, they had been reduced to a state of ignorance that was inexcusable.

And what of the generation of our day? Ponder the knowledge that has been available to them! In addition to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, and David, they have access to all of the Prophets, John the

Baptist, the ministry of the Lord Jesus, the Apostles, James, and Jude. Add to that the great men of history who have uncovered some of the truth that was hidden prior to them: Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Spurgeon, Campbell, and countless others. **All of them discovered and propagated things that had been lost to the masses.** In some respects, these men uncovered bits and pieces – but they were **key** bits and pieces. Yet, in this day, they have again been covered by the rubble of carnality and human tradition.

Why has all of this occurred? It is because of *"faithless generations"* (Mk 9:19) – generations who, unlike Abraham and those faithful before him, let truth fall in the street and thereby fail (Isa 59:14-15).

If Isaac were to have lived in this generation, he would have known nothing of the requirement of a lamb! It is **not an innocent situation, and confirms that we are living in a great falling away.** It can be said of this generation, *"Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law"* (2 Chron 15:3).

GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF A LAMB

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." Other versions read, *"Abraham answered, "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son,"* ^{NIV} *"God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son,"* ^{TNK} *"God will see to it, my son,"* ^{LIVING} *"God will see to Himself a sheep,"* ^{ABP} *"God himself will give the lamb for the burned offering,"* ^{BBE} *"God will provide Himself a sheep for a whole-burnt-offering, my son,"* ^{BRENTON} *"God will provide Himself a victim for an holocaust, my son,"* ^{DARBY} *"God Himself is providing the lamb for the sacrifice, my son,"* ^{ERV} and *"Son, God will see to it that there's a sheep for the burnt offering."* ^{MESSAGE}

David reasoned in the same manner under a different set of circumstances. When he had numbered

Israel, the Lord gave him three choices of the chastisement to be suffered. David refused to make a choice, putting himself in the hand of the Lord, and trusting him to make the appropriate choice (2 Sam 24:13-14). It is good for us to learn from these records.

Considering the time in which this saying was uttered, it stands as one of the most profound utterances ever made by a mortal man. It was obviously a prophecy, spoken with God Himself in mind. It was more than a quick word to allay the concerns of Isaac. Ponder the circumstances under which this insightful word was spoken.

➔ There had not been the slightest hint that the Seed of the woman, promised in Eden, would die. The only thing declared was that His heel would be bruised by the serpent, and at that time, I doubt that anyone would have concluded that meant the Seed would die.

➔ God had said He would bless the world through Abraham's Seed, but had never spoken clearly concerning that Seed being the Messiah.

➔ God had not divulged anything to Abraham about the coming Savior suffering and dying.

➔ There had been no exposition of the need for an atonement by the offering of a Man.

➔ There had not been a single word divulged to humanity that sin would be expiated by the death of a Savior.

➔ Abraham could have reasoned that Isaac himself was the promised Seed.

➔ The only event that could possibly have led to the conclusion that God would provide Himself a lamb was the provision of coats of skin for Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21).

Under these circumstances, it is clear that this was a prophecy given for future ages. Remember, that at the time noone was writing Scripture – **noone!**

Noone heard the word except Isaac, for they had already left the two young men accompanying them. Therefore, it was true of this saying, as others sayings concerning Israel, *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."* (Rom 15:4).

For those living in the reign of *"the*

1:20; Matt 28:18; 1 Pet 3:22).

Indeed, God has provided for Himself a Lamb, and He did so without conferring with anyone else.

Now, because this was during such a spiritually primitive time, Abraham's utterance of such a prophecy can only be owing to the desire of God to make such a thing known.

Considering the time in which this saying was uttered, it stands as one of the most profound utterances ever made by a mortal man. It was obviously a prophecy, spoken with God Himself in mind. It was more than a quick word to allay the concerns of Isaac.

Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5), this is a clear word concerning *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29). He was not man's Lamb, but God's Lamb, **provided fundamentally for Himself–i.e. to satisfy the demands of His righteousness. God provided Him.**

➔ He sent Him into the world (1 John 4:14).

➔ His grace was upon Him as He grew in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and man (Lk 2:40,52).

➔ He anointed Him for ministry among the people (Acts 10:38).

➔ He *"delivered Him up"* (Rom 8:32).

➔ He raised Him from dead (Acts 13:30).

➔ He *"received"* Him back into heaven (Mk 16:19).

➔ He highly exalted Him, seating Him at His own right hand with all power in heaven and earth (Phil 2:9; Eph

It is not possible that any mortal could have conceived of such a purposeful possibility – not even Abraham. Isaac was not to be offered for sin – at least there was no hint of such a thing in the word delivered to him. He was not told to offer Isaac as a burnt offering *"for"* . . . **No purpose was spelled out.** He was simply told to do it because he was commanded to do so. For Abraham, that was enough to proceed with the doing of it.

GODLY REASONING

This is a day when not much is being said about godly reasoning, or thinking. **A spirit of self-centeredness has been adopted that prohibits such thoughts.** Nevertheless, for those with *"honest and good hearts"* (Lk 8:15), there is a certain kind of reasoning that is adopted. When the Lord commands or exhorts us to do something, and the possibilities of doing it appear out of the question, we must see and say, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Phil 4:13). **It is still possible to think like this: "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I**

rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I

strong" (2 Cor 12:9-10).

If it is still true that "*our sufficiency is of God*" (2 Cor 3:5), then "*all things are possible to him that believeth*" (Mark 9:23). Armed with this

perception, we can proceed with the doing of whatever the Lord has required of us, regardless of its seeming difficulty. **We have Abraham as an example of the extent of what can be done in the name of the Lord.**

ABRAHAM PROCEEDS WITH THE SACRIFICE

"⁹ And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."

Notice the deliberateness with which Abraham proceeds.

THEY CAME TO THE PLACE

"And they came to the place which God had told him of . . ."

Concerning the place where the offering was to be made, the original instruction was, "*one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*"

- ➡ It is witnessed that Abraham had risen *"and went unto the place which God had told him"* (Gen 22:3).
- ➡ *"Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off"* (Gen 22:4).
- ➡ Then Abraham and Isaac left the two young men who were with them saying they would return after they had worshiped (Gen 22:5).
- ➡ Abraham then laid the wood on Isaac, taking the fire and the knife, and *"they went both of them together," proceeding to the appointed place* (Gen 22:6).
- ➡ On the way Isaac asks where the lamb for the burnt offering is, and Abraham tells him God will provide a lamb for Himself; *"so they went both of them together," proceeding to "the place"* (Gen 22:8).

- ➡ Now, they have arrived at the appointed place (Gen 22: 9).

The Nature of Obedience

This is often the nature of obedience – **making progress toward the fulfillment of what has been commanded.** It is not always fulfilled by simply doing one thing. Take, for example, obeying *"the form of the doctrine"* by being baptized (Rom 6:17). More is involved than the act of being baptized itself.

- ➡ There must have been a hearing of the Gospel (Rom 10:14).
- ➡ Someone had to be sent by God to preach the Gospel (Rom 10:15).
- ➡ It was necessary for the convicting work of the Holy Spirit to be accomplished (John 16:8-11).
- ➡ Faith had to take hold of the Word, being persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Acts 8:37).
- ➡ It was necessary for faith to be expressed, and Jesus confessed (Acts 8:37-38).
- ➡ There must have been a determination to save oneself from an untoward generation (Acts 2:40).

Then there was the work of God that also had to be accomplished in the individual.

- ➡ Being given a minister by whom to believe (1 Cor 3:5).
- ➡ Being *"given"* to believe (Phil 1:29).

- ➡ Being given repentance (Acts 5:31).
- ➡ Being *"baptized into Christ's death"* (Rom 6:3).
- ➡ Being *"baptized into Christ"* (Gal 3:27).
- ➡ Experiencing *"the operation of God"* (Col 2:12).
- ➡ The crucifixion of *"the old man"* (Rom 6:6).
- ➡ Being raised to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4).

"Obedience," when properly seen, is a marvelous blending of Divine enablement and human response. The is determination of God and the determination of man become harmonious, as man is marvelously involved in the will of the Lord. All of this is seen and confirmed in the response of Abraham to the command of the Lord.

ABRAHAM BUILT AN ALTAR

" . . . and Abraham built an altar there . . ."

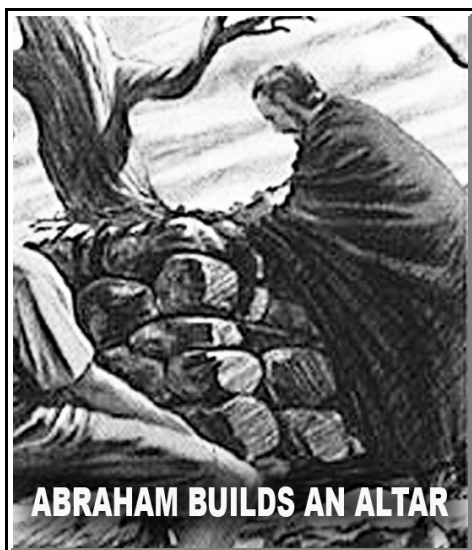
Abraham could not simply find an existing surface on which to offer Isaac. **It was necessary for him to build an altar – a task that must have taken some time.** Assuming the altar was made of stones, stones had to be found that were of appropriate size, and would fit together. This must be done with an acute awareness that he was going to offer his son on this altar.

He had built altars before.

- ➡ When he first arrived in the land, and the Lord *"appeared"* unto him

(Gen 12:7).

- ➔ When he moved to a mountain near to Bethel, following the Lord's appearance to him (Gen 12:8).



- ➔ When he moved to the plain of Mamre, after the Lord had told him to walk through the land (Gen 13:18).

But none of those altars was for a purpose like the one he now built.

Obedience is not always easy, or simplistic, and is never accomplished in a flippant and casual way. There is a sense in which great sobriety accompanies acts of obedience, as well as much thought and deliberation.

HE LAID THE WOOD IN ORDER

"... and laid the wood in order . . ." Other versions read, "placed the wood in order," ^{NKJV} "arranged the wood," ^{NASB} "piled the wood," ^{DARBY} "laid out the wood," ^{TNK} and "placed the wood in order, ready for the fire." ^{LIVING}

Under the Law, which would follow five hundred years latter, the priests were required to lay the wood in order upon the altar, then laying the sacrifice in an orderly manner upon the wood. "And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire" (Lev 1:7). When Elijah had the great contest with the prophets of Baal, he

built an altar and "**put the wood in order**" upon it (1 Kgs 18:33).

You might say that anything associated with the Lord, and especially with sacrifice, must be done in an orderly manner. It must not be haphazard, or in a thoughtless manner.

- ➔ Thus the components of the tabernacle were "**set in order**" (Ex 26:17).
- ➔ The lamps on the golden candlestick were "**set in order**" (Ex 39:37).
- ➔ The bread to be placed on the table of showbread was to be placed there "**in order**" (Ex 40:4,23; Lev 24:8; 2 Chron 13:11).
- ➔ When an animal was dismembered for a sacrifice, the parts had to be placed "**in order**" upon the altar (Lev 1:8,12; 6:12).
- ➔ The whole "**service of the house of the Lord was set in order**" (2 Chron 29:35).
- ➔ When Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus, he "**set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most assuredly believed among us**" (Lk 1:1).
- ➔ Paul wrote to the Corinthians, exhorting to "**Let all things be done decently and in order**" (1 Cor 14:40).

This is the manner of the Kingdom. **The marvelous thing is that prior to the revelation of these things, Abraham went about service pertaining to God in an orderly manner.** I take it that this was not a mere coincidence, but that his faith directed him to go about things in an orderly manner.

Chaos and disorderliness has no part in things pertaining to life and godliness. A religion that tends to ward such as manner is more related to the heathen way of viewing things.

HE BOUND ISAAC

"...and bound Isaac his son . . ."

Other versions read, "**made tight the bands round Isaac his son,**" ^{BBE} "**tied up his son Isaac,**" ^{GWN} "**bound the feet of Isaac together,**" ^{SEPTUAGINT} and "**binding hand and foot Isaac.**" ^{ABP} The Amplified Bible has this footnote: "ISAAC, WHO WAS PERHAPS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD (ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT HISTORIAN JOSEPHUS), SHARED HIS FATHER'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PROMISE. WAS NOT HIS VERY EXISTENCE THE RESULT OF GOD KEEPING HIS WORD? (GEN. 17:15–17)."

The word translated "**bound**" means "TO TIE WITH THONGS: — BIND." ^{STRONG'S}

While this is a very touching scene of Abraham's unwavering faith and obedience, **we are also exposed to faith and deportment of Isaac.** Adam Clarke is of the opinion that Isaac was thirty-three years of age, which would have made him the same age as Jesus when He willingly sacrificed Himself to God. Whether this is so or not, I do not know. However, it is evident that Isaac was no mere child, but a strong young man. Yet, he did not resist his father tying him up. **He was a willing sacrifice, and apparently, like Jesus, opened not his mouth** (Isa 53:7; Acts 8:32).

In this text we are being exposed to genuine faith and heartfelt obedience – **both on the part of Abraham and his son Isaac.** Because he is the "**father of all them that believe**" (Rom 4:11), the emphasis is placed on Abraham.

Wherever faith is found, it conducts itself in this manner – always obeying, without murmuring or question.

Today, under the auspices of "**Babylon the Great**" (Rev 17:5;.18:2), a spurious "faith" has been developed and proclaimed that is not so characterized. It is a purported faith that does not demand obedience, is not consistent, and does not alter the individual. It is not "**the faith of Abraham**" (Rom 4:16), and therefore is not acceptable to God. It is the kind of faith that would never have constrained the patriarch to do what he did, or Isaac to respond as he did. That means it is not real. It did not come from Gd, and it does not please Him.

HE LAID HIM ON THE ALTAR

“ . . . and laid him on the altar upon the wood . . . ” Again, from a human point of view, this would have been an impossible thing to have done with the whole heart. Of course, Abraham was not acting from a human point of view, but as one that had unwavering faith in the Living God.

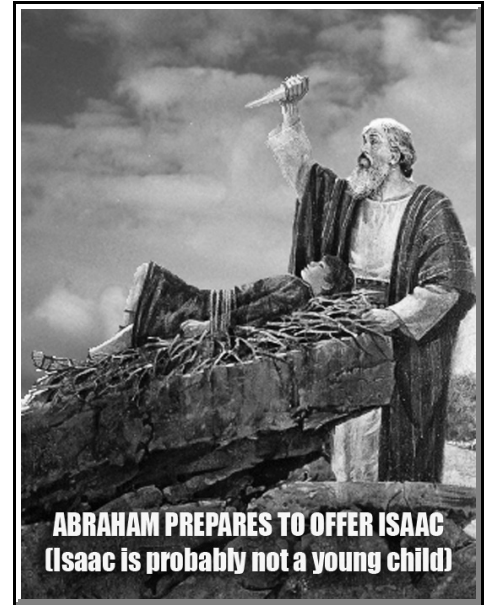
HE TOOK THE KNIFE TO SLAY HIS SON

“And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.”

So far as Abraham was concerned, Isaac was as good as offered. Apparently, the thought never occurred to him that Isaac would not be offered as a burnt offering. He did not linger, hoping that God would suddenly intervene, freeing him from the obligation that had been set before him. set before him – to offer Isaac as a burnt offering to God. See the godly determination!

The Lord had not given Abraham any reason to believe His word was not to be carried out. In fact, Abraham was reasoning it **had** to be carried out. He had not pled with the Lord not to have him go through with this sacrifice. There had been no exhibition of anger, confusion, and obstinance.

The epistle to the Hebrews states that *“Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead”* (Heb 11:19). In fact, it is written, *“Indeed in the sense that Isaac was figuratively dead [potentially sacrificed], he did [actually] receive him back from the dead”* (Heb 11:19b, Amplified Bible). **Abraham saw Isaac as dead, and when he received him back, he considered it was the same thing as him being raised from the dead.** I take it that this does not refer to the birth begetting and birth of Isaac, but to the fact that he returned to the young men with Isaac. He considered that to be in the category of Isaac being raised from the dead. That is how determined Abraham was to offer Isaac.



**ABRAHAM PREPARES TO OFFER ISAAC
(Isaac is probably not a young child)**

That is how real faith is! It reckons that the will of God is what is to be done, and that Divine approval means it has been done. It proceeds without any thought of being disobedient.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD STOPS ABRAHAM



**REMBRANDT'S PAINTING OF
ABRAHAM OFFERING ISAAC**

“¹¹ And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said,

Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. ¹² And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

We learn from this incident that heaven monitors what men are doing – particularly when it is in response to a word from God. We will also learn that angels, while they are exceedingly wise and informed, are not omniscient. This is confirmed by the declaration God's wisdom, at this time, when it is being made known to principalities and powers in heavenly places. As it is written, *“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the*

church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:10).

We are introduced to this reality in this text. **Something is done that will confirm to a holy angel that Abraham is everything he has been represented to be: a man of unwavering faith in God.**

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED

“And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham . . . ”

The angel does not say a word until Abraham is ready to plunge the knife into Isaac. **If, at this time, Abraham's emotions are controlling him, he may not be able to respond in a timely manner.** If he is operating in the energy of the flesh, his response will be retarded. But if he is operating by *“the law of faith”* (Rom 3:27), he will be able to instantly respond to this messenger. That is one of the

indispensable characteristics of faith.

Notice, the angel calls Abraham *“out of heaven.”* Other versions read, *“from heaven,”*^{NKJV} and *“shouted to him from heaven.”*^{LIVING} How sensitive of alert does a person have to be to hear a voice from heaven? Once, when God Himself spoke publically from heaven, some people who heard it said *“it thundered”* (John 12:29). Another time, when the glorified Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus and spoke to him, those who were standing by him heard a voice, but not with a discerning ear (Acts 9:7; 22:9).

The angel called Abraham’s name twice, indicating the gravity of the situation: *“Abraham, Abraham.”* Will the patriarch be alert to the call?

When God spoke to Jacob in a vision, he called out, *“Jacob, Jacob”* (Gen 46:2). When the Lord called out to Moses at the burning bush, He said *“Moses, Moses”* (Ex 3:4). When Jesus revealed to Peter that Satan had desired him, to sift him as wheat, He said, *“Simon, Simon”* (Lk 22:31). When Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus, He called out, *“Saul, Saul”* (Acts 9:4) – a call to which Paul referred two times (Acts 22:7; 26:14). **There was an instant response to all of these calls.**

The call is intended to interrupt what Abraham is doing. He is not to continue his action while listening to what is being addressed to him. Abraham knows this, probably intuitively, so halts what he is about to do in order to hear this voice from heaven.

Interrupting Calls

There are times when the Lord intends to alter, or even halt, what we are doing. It is not that what is being done is sinful or unlawful. In the case of Abraham. He was doing what the Lord told him to do. However, there are heavenly priorities that must be honored, and often we are made aware of them while we are in the midst of something that, of itself, is lawful.

When Elijah was told to anoint

Elisha to be a prophet, his own replacement, he found Elisha *“plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth”* – i.e. he had already plowed with eleven of the pairs, and was not plowing with the last pair, apparently near the end of his work. As Elijah passed by, he threw his mantle on Elisha with no accompanying word. Immediately Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah *“Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee.”* Elijah responded in a forthright manner: *“Go back again: for what have I done to thee?”* (1 Kgs 19:20a). The Amplified Bible reads, *“And he [testing Elisha] said, Go on back. What have I done to you? [Settle it for yourself]”* (1 Kgs 19:20b). Confirming that he was willing to follow Elijah immediately, *“he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him”* (1 Kgs 19:21). **His life had been Divinely interrupted, and he knew it.**

“mending their nets.” (Matt 4:21). There was certainly nothing wrong about that. However, Jesus also interrupted them, calling them. It is written, *“And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him”* (Matt 4:22). Their lives had been interrupted by the Lord, and they immediately knew it, and responded accordingly.

There was also Matthew. When the Lord found him, he was *“sitting at the receipt of custom,”* or *“sitting at the tax collectors booth”*^{NIV} (Matt 9:9). Suddenly, his life was interrupted as the Lord Jesus said, *“Follow me.”* Recognizing the gravity of the moment, Matthew *“arose and followed him”* at that very moment (Matt 9:9). Luke says of the occasion, *“And he left all, rose up, and followed him”* (Luke 5:28). **His life had been interrupted, and he knew it.**

Who can forget the call of Saul of Tarsus? He was zealously fulfilling a mission which he thought was pleasing to God. Suddenly, Jesus apprehended him, interrupting what he was doing. When Saul asked Him what he should

There are far too many people who wear the name of Christ who are deferring to lesser things, and thus becoming more dull to the callings of God.

Take, for another example, Peter and Andrew. When Jesus found them, they were *“casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers”* (Matt 4:18). That certainly was not wrong of itself – in fact, it was an honorable thing to do. However, Jesus gave them something to do that was more important: *“Follow Me . . .”* (Matt 4:19). Immediately, deferring to the superior, they *“left their nets and followed Him”* (Matt 4:20). Their lives had been interrupted for some better thing, and they knew it.

Then, there were James and John, also fishermen, who were

do, Jesus responded, *“Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do”* (Acts 9:6). **Immediately** *“Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink”* (Acts 9:8-9). **His life had been interrupted, and he knew it.**

An Area Requiring Personal Attention

The matter of sensitivity to *“the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”* (Phil 3:14) is something that cannot be

legislated. That by no means suggests that such sensitivity is nothing more than a possible option in life. Because of the nature of salvation, and the way in which it is brought to its intended culmination, this must be worked out in the lives of all believers.

There are far too many people who wear the name of Christ who are deferring to lesser things, and thus becoming more dull to the callings of God. This is a most dangerous posture.

true servant. In the case of Abraham it confirms that he had not divorced what he was doing from what God Himself had required of him. **He had maintained a keen awareness that it was God Himself with whom He had to do** (Heb 4:13).

It is tragic that we are living in a time when there is little of this kind of alertness within the professed church. This condition contradicts every single thing about the salvation of God. If, in this “*day of salvation*” (2 Cor 6:2), a

God Himself knew that Abraham feared Him, so this test was not intended confirm to Him what was in Abraham’s heart. However, angels apparently do not know what is in men’s hearts, not being granted that unique Divine prerogative.

“HERE AM I”

“ . . . and he said, *Here am I* . . . ”

At the beginning of this trial, when “*God did tempt Abraham,*” he called and “*said unto him, Abraham,*” and the patriarch responded, “*Here I am*” (Gen 22:1). Now, when he is about to take the life of Isaac as he was commanded to do, an angel calls out to him, and he instantly answered, “*Here am I*” (Gen 22:11). When an angel spoke to **Jacob** in a dream “*saying Jacob,*” Jacob said “*Here am, I*” (Gen 31:11). He responded the same way again in Genesis 46:2). When God called **Moses** at the burning bush, he responded “*Here am I*” (Ex 3:4). When **Isaiah** heard the Lord say, “*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us,*” he answered, “*Here am I; send me*” (Isa 6:8).

This is a response of readiness, and is always the prelude to involvement in the “*good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*” (Rom 12:1-2). It is the response of a

person has little or no sensitivity to God, it is a glaring negation of some of the key factors in that salvation.

- ➡ We are “*called into the fellowship*” of God’s “*Son Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor 1:9).
- ➡ We are welcomed into the **fellowship** of both the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3).
- ➡ The sheep of Christ know Him, **know** His voice, and follow Him (John 10:27).
- ➡ The saved enjoy “*the communion of the Holy Spirit*” (2 Cor 13:14).
- ➡ All of those enjoying the benefits of the New Covenant “**know**” the Lord (Heb 8:11).

Spiritual obtuseness and slowness of heart (Lk 24:25) may very well exist among professing believers, **but such a condition is in no way acceptable to the Lord.**

NOW I KNOW

“ . . . And he said, *Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.*”

Stop!

The angel commands Abraham to stop doing something God told him to do. He was not to lay a hand on Isaac, nor do him any harm. To a simplistic soul, this would be too difficult to sort out. One can almost hear such a person responding, “*Why? This is something the Lord commanded me to do!*” A modern person who has bought into certain kinds of doctrines might have shouted out, “*The Lord rebuke you, Satan, Get thee behind me!*”

Why did not Abraham respond after that manner? Why was he so pliable in the hands of the Lord? Why did he not have more questions, surfacing doubts, and confusion? **It is because he had faith, and that is not the way faith responds!** It is really just that simple. Those who consistently respond in a hesitating manner are exhibiting unbelief, not faith.

Now I Know

The angel is speaking for God, and yet is himself learning from this mission, while, technically speaking, God learned nothing from it. God Himself knew that Abraham feared Him, so this test was not intended confirm to Him what was in Abraham’s heart. **However, angels apparently do not know what is in men’s hearts, not being granted that unique Divine prerogative.**

Notice what the angel says he now knows: “**that thou fearest God!**” Other versions read, “*the fear of God is in your heart,*” ^{BBE} “*thou art a God-fearing man,*” ^{JPS} “*how devoted you are to God,*” ^{NAB} “*you art fearing God,*” ^{YLT} “*God is first in your life,*” ^{LIVING} and “*fear and revere God.*” ^{AMPLIFIED}

Most commentators view this as God Himself speaking, even though the text plainly says, “*the angel of the Lord*”

called unto him" (Gen 22:11). **Angel's frequently spoke as though God Himself was speaking.** For example, the Law was *"given by the disposition [direction of ^{NKJV}] "of angels" (Acts 7:53), and was "spoken by angels" (Heb 2:2). Yet, it is written, "And God spake all these words . . ." (Ex 20:1-17). Moses said the people "heard the voice of God" (Deut 4:33). He told the people, "The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire." (Deut 5:4).*

When the Lord called Moses at the burning bush, it was an angel that appeared to him (Ex 3:2). Yet, it is written that God *"called unto him out of the midst of the bush" (Ex 3:4). Jesus said that God "spoke unto" Moses "in the bush" Mk 12:26). Stephen referred*

to *"the angel" which appeared unto him [Moses] "in the bush" (Acts 7:35). He then quotes the words "the Lord" spoke to him, commissioning him to go to Egypt to free His people. He closed by saying, "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:35). The Lord, then, spoke through His messenger, the angel who appeared to Moses in the bush.*

The same type of thing is found in our text. An angel has spoken to Abraham the message given to him by God. Yet, that angel is also observing the circumstance, as God has shown him something he had not seen before.

Now he knew, by personal observation, that Abraham feared God. **This testified to the wisdom of God, which God is now making known through the church.**

This is the kind of circumstance that is also applied to the marvelous working of God in salvation. *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph 3:6-10). This aspect of Divine workings is not commonly known. It confirms that the saving of men is not all that is being accomplished in this "great salvation."*

ABRAHAM SEES A RAM CAUGHT IN A THICKET

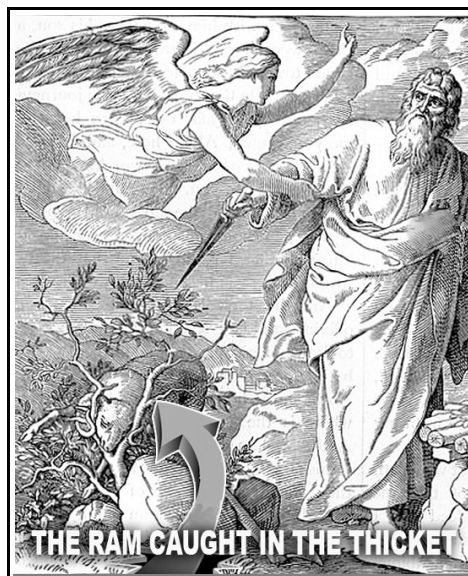
"¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."

Notice the alertness and keenness of Abraham throughout this entire event. It is a rich commentary on the impact of faith upon the thinking and sensitivity of those possessing it.

ABRAHAM LIFTED UP HIS EYES

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked . . ."

Having heard a voice from heaven, Abraham lifted up his eyes. Previously, they had been fastened on his son, Isaac, as he prepared to take his life, then offer his body as a burnt offering to God. **How could he shift his focus so suddenly, and still be alert to what was around him?** This again can be traced to faith, which is the grand enabler for the people of God. **When faith is "obtained," it brings a power that cannot be obtained independent of it.** Among other things, that power is particularly for doing the will of the Lord



in an alert, instant, and acceptable manner. Where faith is not present, such a response is not possible, for *"without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb 11:6). Although most creedal statements of professing churches acknowledge this, faith is glaringly absent from their constituency.*

A RAM CAUGHT IN A THICKET

" . . . and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns . . ."

God had called upon Abraham to offer a sacrifice on a certain mountain in the land of Moriah. **That offering would, indeed be offered – but on a substitutionary basis.** In the alertness of faith, Abraham sees a sacrificial animal behind him, caught by its horns in a thicket. The fact that this ram had horns confirmed it was not an infant animal, but one of considerable development. **He was to rams what Isaac was to a male child – fully developed.**

I am not sure what type of animal this was. Some say it was a strong and developed sheep, and others are of the opinion it was a developed goat. Still others feel it was a special category of animal. I was unable to find a satisfactory answer.

Whether this was a local ram that, by Divine guidance, was caught in this particular thicket, or whether it was a special creation, I do not know. This was, however according to Divine purpose. God knew all along what He was going to do. Now Abraham knew it

A Ram

When God had Abraham prepare some animals for the making of a covenant, one of them was “a ram of three years old” (Gen 15:9). Rams were also offered as “burnt offerings” unto the Lord (Lev 9:2; 16:3), and for a trespass offering” (Lev 19:21).

When Daniel saw a vision depicting world governments, one of them was likened to a “a ram which had two horns” (Dan 8:3), signifying a strong and well developed animal.

Because of these, and other considerations, I will consider the “ram” to be a special category of animals, noted for strength, and without regard to a particular species. The Tabernacle, for example, had upon it a layer of “rams skins dyed red” (Ex 26:14; 36:19; 39:34).

HE OFFERED THE RAM IN THE STEAD OF HIS SON

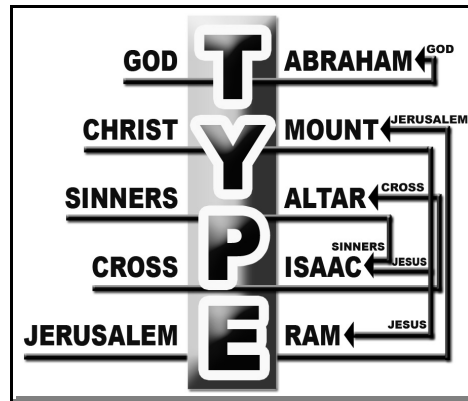
“... and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.” Other versions read, “in the place of his son,” and ^{NASB} “instead of his son.” ^{NIB}

This is the first Scriptural example of a substitutionary sacrifice. Former animal sacrifices were not said to have been offered in the place of men, but were by men. They were an end of themselves.

Notice how Abraham at once knew what to do, even though no directions are said to have been given to him. He was commanded to offer a burnt offering to the Lord. The Lord having spared Isaac, Abraham knew this did not mean an offering was not to be presented to the Lord. He proceeded, therefore, to offer what God had made available to him, for the angel had solemnly instructed him, “And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him” (Gen 22:12). An average man would have packed everything up and returned home, thankful he did not have to offer

his only son. However, **Abraham was more God’s conscious than self-conscious**, so he proceeded to offer a burnt offering to the Lord.

THE GLORIOUS TYPE



Here is one of the most marvelous types in all of Scripture. We have God the Father typified in Abraham. Christ Jesus, the Son of God is typified by the ram (sacrifice). Sinners are a most vividly depicted by Isaac. Isaac is also a type of Christ in the matter of being an “only” son, and a much loved son.

The depiction of the ram dying in the stead of Isaac is a prophetic picture of Christ dying “for us.” Thus it is written, “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). And again, “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him” (1 Thess 5:9-10). And yet again, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16). Insightfully, Paul confessed, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

The substitutionary aspect of Christ’s death underscores the absolute

necessity of sin being judged by God. It could not be overlooked, for God “will be no means clear the guilty,” or “leave the guilty unpunished” ^{NIV} (Ex 34:7). No amount of Divine love could remove **this necessity!**

The sin of the world was taken away (John 1:29) by the death of Christ, when He was “cut off out of the land of the living” (Isa 53:8) – separated from God. The **ultimate** remission of sin could not be accomplished by a word. When Jesus forgave sin, He did so in anticipation of His own death, for “**without shedding of blood is no remission**” (Heb 9:22). This technicality was necessitated primarily because of the nature of God, and secondarily because of the nature of sin.

This same reasoning is involved in God forgiving sin prior to the coming of Christ. Thus these words often accompanied the sacrifices made for sin: “and it shall be forgiven them” (Lev 4:20,26,31,35) – this phrase is mentioned no less than eight times from Genesis thru Isaiah. Jesus also used similar expressions during His prodigious ministry: “thy sins are forgiven thee,” “Her sins which are many, are forgiven,” and “Thy sins are forgiven” (Lk 5:20; 7:47,48).

This did not mean that such forgiveness did not require the death of Christ, or that His death was waived in those case, as not being necessary. Even in those cases, a Substitute was required to fully and finally removed the sin.

The substitutionary aspect of Christ is not often mentioned these days. There is an stress placed on Christ loving us, and Paul, does make a point of this (Gal 2:20; Eph 5:22; 1 John 4:10). **However, that great love could not remove the necessity of a substitutionary death, the judgment of sin, and taking them away from the face of God Almighty.** This is something that must not be forgotten!

ABRAHAM GIVES A SPECIAL NAME TO THE PLACE

*"¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of that place **Jehovahjireh**: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. ¹⁵ And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, ¹⁶ And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: ¹⁷ That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; ¹⁸ And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."*

JEHOVAHJIREH

*"And Abraham called the name of that place **Jehovahjireh**: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. . . ."*

This is the second place that Abraham named. The first was where he struck a covenant with Abimelech. The name the patriarch gave that place was "**Beersheba**" – meaning, "THE WELL OF THE OATH." STRONG'S

Now Abraham names the place where a substitute was provided Isaac: "**Jehovajireh**" – "JEHOVAH WILL SEE TO IT . . . JEHOVAH SEES" STRONG'S; "JEHOVAH WILL SEE, I.E. PROVIDE," MCCLINTOK & STRONG'S; "THE LORD WILL PROVIDE," HITCHCOCK "YAWEH SEES," ISBE

This is the only place in all of Scripture where this word is used – a hyphenated word: "yehovah_yireh." It was an answer to his own statement: "**God will provide Himself a lamb**" (Gen 22:7). **That statement was made by faith.** Abraham did not know how this would carried out. However, when God did what he had said the Lord would do, Abraham immediately recognized it, associated it with what he had said, and named the place in honor of the happening.

This is the way faith speaks, having acquainted those who have

"obtained" it with the One who gave it. Paul expressed himself in a similar manner when he wrote while he was in "bonds," and professed brethren were seeking to add to his affliction: "*For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*" (Phil 1:19). This is a "foot of the mountain of trial" expression as the one bring tried is beginning his ascent of that mountain.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED TO ABRAHAM

"And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: ¹⁷ That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore . . ."

The angel is speaking the words of God – what Peter would call speaking "*as the oracles of God.*" He is delivering a word from God, and thus speaks as he does. This should not confuse anyone. It is simply like quoting a word someone else has spoken to the people to whom it was addressed.

Note, this is "*the second time*" the angel spoke. The first time is when he stopped Abraham from carrying out the sacrifice of Isaac.

This is a particularly important word, because it reveals something about God that is not at all apparent. God swears, taking an oath, that He is going to do something because of what Abraham has done. "*I have sworn by Myself, says the Lord, that since you have done this and have not withheld [from Me] or begrudged [giving Me] your son, your only son.*" AMPLIFIED

The response of the Lord is marvelous. "*In blessing I will bless you and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants like the stars of the*

heavens and like the sand on the seashore." AMPLIFIED This is now the fifth time God has promised to bless and multiply Abraham

➡ GENESIS 12:2 (when he was called, at 70-75 years old).

➡ GENESIS 13:16 (after Lot had separated from him).

➡ GENESIS 15:5 (when he made a covenant with Abraham, shortly before he was 85 years old).

➡ GENESIS 17:2,6 (when he was 99 years old – the year before Isaac was born).

➡ GENESIS 22:17-18 (when a substitute for Isaac was provided – when he was from 120-130 years old).

To this point in time (well over fifty years since the promise was originally stated), "*Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman*" (Gal 4:22). **According to appearance, it certainly did not look like Abraham's offspring would be a vast multitude.** A half a century has passed, and his total offspring tallied up to two. Yet, the Lord kept restating the promise, and even amplifying upon it.

The fact that we are "*made partakers of the Divine nature*" through God's "*exceeding great and precious promises*" (2 Pet 1:4), suggests they ought to be sounded in our ears over and over again. In fact, it is God's manner to do this, always giving us a Divine commitment to offset the suggestions of nature.

POSSESS THE GATE OF HIS ENEMIES

" . . . and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies . . ." Other versions read "*their enemies,*" NKJV/NASB/NIV/NRSV, etc "*will take the land of those who are against them,*" BBE "*will possess the cities of their enemies,*" CJB "*will take possession of their enemies' cities,*" GWN "*take possession of the gates of their enemies,*" SEPTUAGINT and

"the cities of your opponents." ^{ABP}

Versions that read *"His enemies"* include the following. ^{ASV/RV/DARBY/ERV/ESV/JPS/RWB/WEB/YLT/LITV} The Greek INTERLINEAR reads, enemies of Him.

Doctrine Concerning the Seed

We have some apostolic doctrine concerning the seed of Abraham – whether it is always multitude of offspring coming him, or a single individual. *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ"* (Gal 3:16). The promises made to Abraham are summed up in Jesus Christ, and I take it that this part of the promise refers primarily to Christ Jesus.

It is true that during the time of Joshua, the Israelites possessed the gates, land, and cities of their enemies (Josh 12:1; 21:43). Yet, there were portions of the land that were not fully possessed (Josh 15:63; 17:12).

But when it comes to the Lord's Christ, He possessed the gates of all of His enemies. Destroyed the devil (Heb 2:14), plundered principalities and powers (Col 2:15), triumphed over death and the grave, which is *"the last enemy"* (Rom 1:4; Rev 1:18). He has not been given to the church in the capacity of *"Head over all things"* (Eph 1:22). **There is not an inimical personality, whether in this world or under it, or in higher places, that is not presently subject to Christ.** He is, praise God, possessing the gate of His enemies.

BECAUSE THOU HAST OBEYED MY VOICE

" . . . And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

because thou hast obeyed My voice."

There are both blessings and curses that result because of what men have or have not done – contradicting theology notwithstanding.

➡ Satan was cursed *"because thou hast done this thing"* (Gen 3:4).

➡ Adam was judged and the ground cursed *" because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife"* (Gen 3:17).

➡ Abraham was blessed in our text *"because thou hast done this thing"* (Gen 22:16).

➡ Abraham's Seed would bless all nations *"because thou hast obeyed My voice"* (Gen 22:18).

➡ Saul was rejected as king *"because thou hast not kept what the Lord commanded thee"* (1 Sam 13:14), and *"because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord"* 1 Sam 15:23).

➡ The sword did not depart from David's house *"because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife"* (2 Sam 12:10).

➡ Solomon was given an abundance *"because"* he had *"not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment"* (1 Kgs 3:11).

➡ God promised Jehu that the children of his fourth generation would sit on the throne of Israel *"because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in Mine eyes"* (2 Kgs 10:30).

➡ God broke the ships of Jehosaphat *"because thou hast joined thyself to Ahaziah"* (2 Chron :37).

➡ Jesus had something against the church in Ephesus *"because thou hast left thy first love"* (Rev 2:4).

➡ Jesus had something against the church in Pergamos *"because thou hast there them that gold the doctrine of Balaam,"* and some *"that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes"* (Rev 2:14).

➡ Jesus promised the church at Philadelphia He would keep them from the hour of temptation *"because thou hast kept the word of My patience"* (Rev 3:10).

Thus we are introduced to the God who takes note of what men do – as He did in Eden, when Cain and Abel offered to God, when Cain slew Abel, the world during the days of Noah, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and now the response of Abraham. This is the unchangeable God!

Here is an aspect of God that we do well to consider. In it the perspective that is found in expressions like, *"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God."* (Rom 2:8-11).

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC RETURN TO THE YOUNG MEN

¹⁹ *"So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham*

dwelt at Beersheba."

ABRAHAM RETURNED

"So Abraham returned unto his young men . . ."

In an epochal test of his faith, God tempts Abraham, commanding that he offer Isaac to Him as a burnt offering – Given O. Blakely

Before he and Isaac went up the mountain, Abraham had said to these two young men, *“And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you”* (Gen 22:5). Now he had returned, just as he had said.

There is no evidence that Abraham ever shared with them the purpose of the journey. I have often pondered if he shared with them what had taken place on that Mount, or if Isaac reported what had taken place there.

We do not know how long these young men waited for the return of Abraham and Isaac. I am sure it was not a few minutes. They had to:

- ➡ Go up the mountain, carrying the word, the fire, and a knife.
- ➡ Abraham had to build an altar.
- ➡ He had to lay the wood in order upon the altar.
- ➡ He had to tie up Isaac, and him on the wood.

- ➡ He had to removed Isaac from the altar after hearing from the angel.
- ➡ He had to untie Isaac.
- ➡ He had to take hold of the ram caught in the thicket.
- ➡ He had to slay the ram and prepare it for sacrifice.
- ➡ He had to tarry until the whole offering was burnt.
- ➡ Abraham took time to reflect upon the occasion, and give a name to the place.
- ➡ He and Isaac had to come back down the mountain.

Living in a manner that pleases the Lord does involve a lot of details.

THEY WENT TOGETHER TO BEERSHEBA

“ . . . and they rose up and went together to Beersheba . . . ”

Apparently, they returned immediately, no doubt taking he full three days, as when they went from Beersheba to Moriah.

You may rest assured that the trip back was quite different from the trip to Moriah. What joy must have exuded from Abraham and Isaac as they thought upon what had taken place in the high domain.

AND ABRAHAM DWELT AT BEERSHEBA

“ . . . and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.”

Thus became the base of his operation, which continued to involve walking through the land – even though God *“gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child”* (Acts 7:5).

However, he could certainly pass along to his offspring that it was *“a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey”* (Ex 3:8).

Similarly, we believers love to speak of the inheritance that has been promised to us. The consideration of that land contributes to our spiritual stamina and joyful anticipation.

ABRAHAM RECEIVES WORD OF HIS BROTHER NAHOR

“²⁰ And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor;²¹ Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram,²² And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.²³ And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham’s brother.²⁴ And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.”

Nahor was one of Abraham’s brothers: *“Now these are the*

generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot” (Gen 11:27). Haran died before they left Ur of the Chaldees: *“And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees”* (Gen 11:28).

Although Nahor did not go with Terah, Abraham, Lot (Haran’s son), and Sarah, he also was a follower of God. It is said of God, that He was *“the God of Abraham, and “the God of Nahor”* (Gen 31:53).

The significance of Nahor is seen

in the fact that he was the father of Rebekah, who would become the wife of Isaac. When Abraham sent his servant out to find a wife for Isaac, here is what he told him. *“And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac”* (Gen 24:3-4).

Our text confirms the direction of the Lord in providing a wife for Isaac.

CONCLUSION

Thus we have seen the stage continuing to be set for the coming Messiah. The purpose, of God is being shaped so that there will be a godly seed who will be ready to receive the	preparatory Law, live in Canaan, and develop a culture into which the Messiah could be born. Through Abraham God will reveal the nature and effectiveness of faith. He will	demonstrate how faith enables a person to be alert, hear with discernment, obey, and draw proper conclusions. In Abraham we have a tailored example of living by faith.
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Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 6/1/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The thirty-fourth lesson will cover verses 1 through 20 of chapter twenty-three: “SARAH DIES AND IS BURIED.” At one hundred and twenty-seven years of age, Sarah dies. She was in Kirjatharba, later to be called “Hebron.” When Abraham had mourned for her, he spoke to the sons of Heth, asking that they give him a burying place for Sarah. After they had offered him the best of their sepulchers, Abraham declined their offer, asking to rather purchase the cave of Machpelah as a burying place. When he was offered the place for nothing, Abraham declined, insisting that he pay them what the place was worth. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.